

Paul's letter to the Galatians



Abandoning God's Grace

Galatians 1:6-12



Steve Lewis

www.SpiritAndTruth.org

1:6 ~ Deserting Him who called you

- Imposing the Mosaic Law on believers means abandoning God's grace as the exclusive means of gaining a right standing before a holy God.
- **"amazed"** (*thaumazō*) ~ astonished, astounded, or bewildered.
- **"deserting"** (*metatithēmi*) ~ to transpose or replace one thing with another.
- **"Him who called you"** ~ not merely abandoning a particular idea or a minor point of doctrine, but drifting away from God Himself by perverting His gracious plan for their salvation.
- **"the grace of Christ"** ~ the gospel operates solely on the principle of grace. Salvation is given as a gift to every person who believes and relies solely on what Christ accomplished as their substitute by dying in their place to reconcile them to a holy God.

1:6-7 ~ A different gospel is no gospel at all

- **“for a different gospel”** (*heteros*) ~ a completely different kind. They were being persuaded that God’s grace is not enough, and that God requires something more of them in order to be saved.
- **“which is really not another”** (*allos*) ~ not another of the same kind. It was really no gospel at all since it was contrary to the principle of salvation by grace alone.
- The Judaizing teachers insisted on imposing the requirements of the old covenant as a means for gaining and maintaining a right relationship with God. But that perverts the gospel of pure grace by replacing the gift of God with futile attempts to earn God’s favor through human effort.

1:7 ~ Distorting the “grace of Christ”

- **“there are some who are disturbing you”** (*tarassō*) ~ to stir up or agitate something. The false teachers were upsetting, troubling, unsettling, confusing, and distressing the new Christians in the churches of Galatia.
“the disturbers of you” ~ they were *characteristically* troublesome.
- They not only **“distort”** the gospel, but they **“want”** to do it.
“want” (*thelō*) ~ to desire, wish, or determine to do something. It was God’s will to save sinners by the grace of Christ alone, but it was the false teachers’ will to exchange the true gospel for something else.
“distort” (*metastrephō*) ~ to turn around or to turn something into its opposite. If salvation is achieved solely on the basis of the **“grace of Christ”** then it cannot also depend on any human effort to gain God’s favor without destroying the foundation on which salvation is built.

1:8 ~ A hypothetical scenario

- **“if we or an angel from heaven”** ~ a Greek third class condition expressing the unlikelihood or improbability of something happening. It would be impossible for God’s holy angels to depart from the truth, just as it would be impossible for the apostle Paul to preach a gospel contrary to what he preached. There is only one true gospel, and it is the same message that Paul had always preached.
- The words **“preach”** and **“preached”** are not in the original text. **“to preach a gospel”** (*euaggelizō*, “gospelize”) – to share the good news of God’s grace.
- **“accursed”** (*anathema*) ~ carries the idea of being cursed or separated from God’s approval to the point of being eternally condemned.

1:9 ~ The actual situation

- **“As we have said before, so I say again now”** ~ Paul had warned them about false teaching, and he now reminded them of what he had said.
- **“if any man is preaching to you”** ~ a Greek first class condition that is assumed to be true. This could be paraphrased as “someone is in fact preaching a contrary gospel” with its accompanying curse.

Verse 8	Verse 9
a hypothetical scenario (subjunctive mood)	the actual situation (indicative mood)
the perspective of the missionaries (“ <i>we preached</i> ”)	the perspective of the recipients (“ <i>you received</i> ”)

1:10 ~ Does this sound like people-pleasing to you?

- **“For”** introduces Paul's explanation for such severe language. He was accused of saying what his audience wanted to hear in order to gain a following for himself. But here Paul had not spoken like a people-pleaser.
- **“if I were still trying to please men”** ~ a Greek second class condition that is assumed to be false. Paul was not seeking to please people but was a devoted bondservant who seeks only to please his Master.
“If I were still trying to please men (but I am not doing that)”
- As a **“bond-servant of Christ,”** Paul had the right to pronounce a curse on anyone who tried to distort the gospel of grace by adding human works to the finished work of Christ.

1:11-12 ~ The true gospel as divine revelation

- The gospel of God's grace "**is not according to man**" ~ it did not originate with or conform to human rules or standards. It is not the kind of solution that people would conceive of as a way to gain a right standing before a holy God.
- "**I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it**" ~ the source of Paul's gospel was not from any human authority, nor through the teaching or instruction given by another person or group of people.
- "**I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ**" (*apokalupsis*) ~ the unveiling or disclosure of something that was previously unseen. The resurrected Christ spoke directly with Paul (Acts 9:1-18), so his authority was not inferior to the twelve apostles in Jerusalem.

Summary

- The Judaizing teachers insisted on imposing the requirements of the old covenant as essential for gaining and maintaining a right relationship with God.
- But that destroys the gospel of pure grace by exchanging the gift of God for attempting to earn God's favor through human effort.
- This would mean abandoning the sole means of gaining a right standing before a holy God, which is the gospel of God's grace.



OR

